Decline in enrollment spells the end after more than 100 years

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After more than 100 years in operation, Trinity Catholic School will close its doors in May.

The school, located in St. Martinville, wasn’t able to enroll enough students to remain in operation, according to the Diocese of Lafayette. Diocese officials said earlier this month that at least 170 students would need to register for 2015-16. As of Wednesday’s enrollment deadline, only 127 students had been signed up.

“With deepest regret and after prayerful reflection, Bishop (Michael) Jarrell will allow the school to close at the end of the 2014-2015 academic year,” the diocese confirmed Friday.

Word began circulating among parents and school supporters about a month ago that Trinity Catholic was in danger of closing. An online petition was established to try to garner signatures and keep the school open. On March 5, the diocese said the school had a budget deficit of at least $250,000, and that financial cuts and a loan from the diocese were being considered as ways to keep Trinity Catholic in operation. Ultimately, those efforts were unsuccessful.

“The long-term viability of the school is simply not demonstrable at this time in measurable and compelling ways,” the diocese statement continued. “Pastors and principals of neighboring schools have agreed to give special consideration towards the acceptance of Trinity students for the fall.”

In addition, the diocese will try to help Trinity Catholic teachers and staff employment in other Catholic schools and institutions.

“Trinity Catholic School will forever hold a sacred place in the hearts of all who have benefited by its rich tradition of excellence in Catholic learning and faith formation,” the statement read.

Trinity Catholic had students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grades on two campuses in St. Martinville. The school dated its origins to March 1881, with the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in St. Martinville, according to a history on the Trinity Catholic website.

The school was the only Diocese of Lafayette school in St. Martinville.